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THE BROOKE FAMILY OF VIRGINIA.

By PROF. ST. GEORGE TUCKER BROOKE, Morgantown, W. Va.

(CONTINUED)

"On Sunday morning (7th April, 1782) died suddenly in this town, Colonel George Brooke, Treasurer of Virginia. Friendship may, without the imputation of flattery, hold (him) up to private life as a pattern of parental tenderness, and conjugal virtue; and to those in a public line, as a faithful and disinterested servant of his country" (Nicholson & Prentiss' *Virginia Gazette*, Richmond, 13th April, 1782). The paper contains forty-four lines of verse on Colonel Brooke's death signed Edgar.

The *Virginia Gazette* of October 26, 1738, says of Colonel George Brooke's father: "Last Saturday was Sennight (14 October, 1738), died at his House in King William County, Mr. Humphrey Brooke, a Merchant of considerable Note; and a Justice of Peace of the said County. He was a tender Husband, an indulgent Father and a good Neighbour; he justly deserved the good Character he had acquired, and his death is much lamented."

The following account of "Mantapike," one of the old Brooke family ancestral homes, is from a letter dated "Richmond, Va., November 20th, 1896," written by an elderly lady, the maiden name of whose paternal grandmother was Nancy Brooke, a sister of Humphrey Brooke who married Sally Page and lived in Clarke county, Va.; said Nancy was a neice of Colonel George Brooke, of Mantapike, and had a brother, Robert Brooke, who lived in "Richmond until he had grown daughters." This Humphrey Brooke, before moving to Clarke (or Frederick county) lived several years in King William county, at a place called "Greenplains," near Colonel "Jack" Taliaferro's. Nancy Brooke was the wife of Colonel "Jack" Taliaferro:

"'Mantua,' the old home of the Braxton's, was in the neighborhood of 'Mantapike.' When I knew it, it was owned by Carter Braxton, a prominent lawyer and politician; both places were on a long stretch of Mattaponi river bottom, about a mile wide, and twenty or more miles long, which had no doubt been patented by the early Braxtons. As we used to jog along in our carriages on the road which ran for miles between the flats and a range of hills on the other side, we always looked out for the two old places, and discussed them. 'Mantapike' was immediately on the river and so unhealthy it was deserted and went to decay. When I last saw it over 50 years ago, the roof was falling in; it was a rambling brick house, 1½ stories; the farm, a very valuable one, had then been bought by a Mr. Gresham who built on another site."

Concerning General George Mercer Brooke the following extracts are

taken from the Official Reports of Generals Ripley, Porter and Brown, and speak for themselves:

"FORT ERIE, August 17th, 1814.

"They (23rd Infantry) were in the fort during the time of the explosion and their conduct is highly spoken of by Major Brooke, their Commanding Officer. Indeed from the high state to which that regiment has been brought by Major Brooke, I am convinced that no troops will behave better. Major Brooke did every thing in his power, and it affords me pleasure at all times to call the attention of the general commanding to this amiable and accomplished officer. I have the honor to be &c.

"E. W. RIPLEY,

"Brigadier Comd'g 2nd Brigade.

"Brigadier General Gaines."

"FORT ERIE, September 22nd, 1814.

"The right column was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, headed by 400 infantry under Major Brooke, followed by 500 volunteers. Of the other regular officers, Lieutenant-Colonel McDonald and Major Brooke, senior, in command, will report to you in relation to their respective divisions. Permit me, however, to say of these two officers that much as was left to them by the fall of their distinguished leaders, they were able to sustain their parts in the most admirable manner, and they richly deserve the notice of the government.

"I have the honor to be, &c.,

"P. B. PORTER,

"Brig. Gen. Com'd'g Volunteers and Militia.

"Major-General Brown, Commanding, &c."

"HEADQUARTERS, CAMP FORT ERIE, September 29, 1814.

"Sir,—In my letter of the 18th instant I briefly informed you of the fortunate issue of the sortie which took place the day preceding. General Ripley had inclined to the left, where Major Brooke's command was engaged, with a view of making some necessary enquiries of that officer, and in the act of doing so was unfortunately wounded. Major Brooke, to whom much credit is due for the distinguished manner in which he executed the orders he received," &c.

"I have the honor to be

"JACOB BROWN."

"Hon. Secretary of War." From "Official Letters, &c., by John Brannan, Washington City, 1823."

The following letter concerning General George Mercer Brooke's conduct at Fort Erie, in 1814, has never been printed :

"WILLARD'S, 31 Jan., 1851.

"DEAR SIR :

"I had a conversation this morning with General Jones on the subject of General Brooke's service in the army. He exhibited to me the official statement which was forwarded to you ; and, in addition, related that at the defence of Fort Erie, when the enemy in large force were establishing batteries, it was necessary to batter them both during the night and day to prevent their construction ; and, as they were somewhat masked by skirts of woods, and as the enemy were in such force as to prevent the egress of any small force from the fort, there was great difficulty in ascertaining the means of advantageous defence, the active mind and daring spirit of Major Brooke then removed the difficulty. He originated the idea and volunteered to reach the enemy's line at night with the assistance of a drummer boy, and to fix a light in line of fire upon the concealed battery. The thought was scarcely conceived before it was executed by him. With great personal hazard, he reached the enemy's lines, hung a lantern in a tree upon the line of fire, and the batteries were demolished with great loss to the enemy. "Who hung the lantern there?" has been a password in the army since that period. His conduct upon that occasion, and his daring boldness at the sortie of Fort Erie, gained not only the admiration of all his comrades, but also of the enemy, by many of whom his person was known, by all, his name. To the day of his death his love for his native State was prominent, and his pride at advancement was always the greater when he remembered the land of his birth. I write this hastily (about leaving for New York). Please copy and forward to Col. Garnett.*

"Yours sincerely,

"LARKIN SMITH."

(The General Jones referred to in this letter was General Roger Jones (father of Catesby ap R.), for years the Adjutant General of the U. S. Army, and a devoted friend of General Brooke. K. C. B.)

Brevet Brigadier-General George M. Brooke entered the Army of the United States in 1808. He was major of the 23d Infantry at the battle of Niagara or "Lundy's Lane," and (Major McFarland being killed) "the command of that regiment devolved upon Major Brooke, an officer of no less intrepidity and valor." This was in Colonel Miller's famous charge and capture of the British Battery. See Thomson's *War of 1812 and War With Mexico*.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

* Col. William Garnett, who had married the sister of General Brooke.